

## THE VITAL POWER OF TRUTH.

It is natural that men should band together in societies, clans, Brotherhoods, churches, etc. but at the same time there must be a basis of union and a principle of cohesion sufficient to overcome the centrifugal tendency which immediately attacks every organized body the moment it comes into existence. There must be some common bond strong enough to withstand the forces of disintegration, and that bond must be forged out of some section of vital truth. It may only represent a part of the whole body of truth, and yet if it is not counteracted by association with a contradictory error, it will perform its cohesive office, and perpetuate an effective Brotherhood. Somewhere in this particular region of thought we find the answer to the question, "How can great organizations, representing only a part of the truth, not only hold together as they do for centuries, but all the time steadily increase in numbers, power, and influence?"

The answer is, that while they may represent only a part of the truth, that part is cohesive, is full of vitality, is fertile in reproductive power. Whether this be the true theory or not, there are certain facts which are very difficult of explication without it. There are, for instance, various governmental systems in the world, which have stood the test of time, but not one of them, however much it may be loaded with political heresy, fails to exhibit certain distinct and vital principles of government which are divinely ordained. When all of these shall be united in the personal reign of the King of kings, we will have the *perfect* government.

The same observations apply to the various religious organizations. In some things many of them differ radically but in all of them there is a basis of truth which gives them the power to live and grow. A thing which is wholly based upon error cannot live long, if it can live at all. There must be enough truth under it for it to stand upon, else it cannot stand at all. There may be error there also, and the error may eventually subvert what truth is there, so that the structure will finally tumble down; but as long as it stands,

there is evidence of sufficient truth to produce the phenomena of life and growth.

The vital test of every society, of every denomination, of every congregation, is this: "Is it regenerative? Does it exhibit the life giving power? Does it save men and women, and make them bring forth the fruits of righteousness?" If it does these things God's truth is there. Naught but the truth can do these works.

The precious treasure may be filtered through a great deal of human rubbish, men may cast it in awkward and clumsy forms, it may shine through a glass greatly darkened with human ignorance, or prejudice, or preconceived notions, hereditary bias, or traditional mists, but it is there nevertheless in its panoply of power, forcing its way through all sorts of impediments to do the work which God sent it to do. It makes an instrument even of ignorance and superstition to accomplish its purposes. The Methodist mourners' bench, the Calvinist fatalism, the Quaker spiritualism, the Tunker order, the Episcopal ritualism, are all used in their respective spheres as subordinate, or secondary, or accidental means of grace. None of them are wholly in error, or perhaps we had better say, none of them are radical errors. All are based upon sufficient letter of truth to make them available auxiliaries of the *vital* truth. The hypothesis is not an irrational one. In the absence of a more perfect instrument the Holy Spirit does not hesitate to use an imperfect one. It is not the instrument He is so much concerned about as the result, the great end, men and women **SAVED**. If we saw a man in great peril we would not stop to discuss some nice discrimination as to the process of saving him; the thing to do would be to *save* him "by some means." Saving him is the work in hand. *That* done all is done.

Ecclesiastical errors, and even doctrinal errors in secondary matters, may prevent a body of Christians from becoming influential or powerful, may greatly limit their agency in the general work of the Holy Spirit, but it will not prevent the saving operation of grace within the narrow family limits of that particular people, however isolated and peculiar they may be.

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## HAS GOD SPOKEN TO YOU?

Says Dr. Stalker, "Unless God has first spoken to you, it is in vain for you to attempt to speak for God. Before you begin to make God known, you must first yourself know God; if you would bring the message which will move hearts, your own heart must first be moved by it."

Has God spoken to *you*? You may have desires, longings, and wishes, to do good; but has God spoken to you? Have you heard his voice, in the chambers of your soul? Has he said to you, "Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light?" Has he told you of your sins? Has he made you acquainted with your needs? Has he brought you to the mercy-seat? Has he spoken peace and pardon to your own soul? Unless God has spoken to you, your words to others will be like idle tales. Unless he has given his message to you, all that you may say will be but as the sounding brass and as the clanging cymbal, empty, void and vain.

But if God has spoken to you, do not fear to repeat what he says. Go and tell to all the message which you have received from him. Invite others to come to that Saviour whom you have found, and say as did the woman of Samaria, "Come, see a man which told me all things that ever I did; is not this the Christ?"

And if God shall speak to you and speak through you, others will surely hear the voice, and will recognize it, as the voice not of a man, but as a voice pervaded by an inner sound—the sound of the Holy Ghost speaking to the human soul. Your words can never save the sinner, your words can never break the hard heart, your words can never bow the stubborn will, nothing but the weapons of a divine warfare can cast down the high thoughts and imaginations of man, and bring all in subjection to the Lord Jesus Christ. Only the armor of God can win the victory over sin.

O man of God, forget not the source of your strength. Do not waste your life in empty, idle talk. Do not labor for naught, and spend your strength for that which is not bread. Do not seek to feed half-starved souls with